SUPERMAN

Post-CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS

Volume 47:

Legerdemain

LEGERDEMAIN

PART ONE — FORCES IN MOTION

BLOOD ISLAND, CHESAPEAKE BAY, MARYLAND, ACROSS THE WATER FROM PATUXENT NAVAL AIR TESTING STATION.

RELAX, WOULDJA? MARLO'S GOIN' NO PLACE; LEASTWISE, NOT UNTIL HIS *TRIAL*.

ARE YOU SURE *HE* KNOWS THAT?

SUPERMAN CREATED BY JERRY SEIGEL & JOE SHUSTER
BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE

THIS STORY TAKES PLACE BEFORE *ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN* #484 & *AQUAMAN* #1

JOHN OSTRANDER/KIM YALE: WRITERS
GEOF ISHERWOOD: PENCILLER
ROBERT CAMPANELLA: INKER
TODD KLEIN: LETTERER
TOM McCRAW: COLORIST
DAN RASPLER: EDITOR

WHERE'S HE GONNA GO? YOU GOT A NAVAL AIR STATION ACROSS THE BAY, A MAJOR SHIPYARD'S DOWN RIVER, ANNAPOLIS IS JUST *UP* RIVER, AND WASHINGTON'S ONLY ABOUT 100 MILES NORTHWEST AS THE CROW FLIES.

THIS RATHOLE IS CRAWLING WITH GUYS LIKE YOU AND ME, THE NAVY'S PATROLLING THE SHOW, THE AIR FORCE FLIES OVERHEAD...

HE'S SEALED IN TIGHTER THAN A DRUM. *BELIEVE* ME.

"WHAT ABOUT *QURAC*-- HIS OWN COUNTRY?"

"THE PLACE IS BEING RUN BY ONE OF HIS LIEUTENANTS. YOU THINK THIS GUY WANTS MARLO BACK NOW HE'S GOT A TASTE OF POWER? THEY WON'T DO NOTHIN'. *BELIEVE* ME."

"THIS GUY'S GOT A LOT TO ANSWER FOR-- SPONSORING TERRORIST GROUPS LIKE THEM *JIHADS*. ALL THAT CRAP PLUS MORE.

"AIN'T NOBODY BREAKING MARLO OUT. *BELIEVE* ME-- HE'S GOING TO TRIAL AND HE'LL GET WHAT'S COMING TO HIM."

"WHAT IF THEY DON'T *WANT* TO BREAK HIM OUT? WHAT IF ALL THEY WANT IS TO *KILL* HIM?"

THERE HE IS-- BIG AS LIFE AND TWICE AS UGLY.

HOW SURE ARE YOU OF THIS PLAN, CARMICHAEL?

DEPENDS ON HOW GOOD THE *DATA* IS YOU GAVE ME. MY CHIPS ARE NO BETTER THAN ANY *OTHER* COMPUTER CHIPS THAT WAY-- YOU PUT JUNK IN, JUNK COMES OUT.

IF THE INFO'S GOOD, THEN THE PLAN'S SOUND WITHIN ITS PARAMETERS. BESIDES, YOU CAN'T COMPUTE *EVERY* VARIABLE. AND IF YOU DON'T GET ME TO LAND, I WON'T BE ABLE TO FUNCTION AT ALL!

TZEE TZEE TZEE

VOMP!

EVERYONE IN PLACE?

A FEW ARE STILL ARRIVING. THEY SHOULD BE HERE BY TOMORROW MORNING. I WARNED BOOMERANG TO BE ON TIME OR I'D COME LOOKING FOR HIM.

WHO KNOWS? HE MIGHT *LIKE* THAT.

LET'S PUT INTO SHORE. WE GOT A LOT TO DO AND THIS ONE IS GOING TO BE REAL *TRICKY* TO PULL OFF-- UNLESS YOU ALL *WANT* TO GO TO JAIL.

"ME, I'VE *DONE* TIME, AND ONCE WAS ENOUGH, THANK YOU. SO LET'S ALL TRY HARD TO MAKE *THIS* MISSION REAL *SMOOTH*."

GOTHAM CITY. THE WATERFRONT.

LUCKY SHAMROCK

EATS

Miller

MONTE WALSH! I WANT *WORDS* WITH YOU!

AH CHEEZ! DA BATMAN!

BACK AWF! MONTE'S A LI'L SLUG, BUT HE'S ONE OF *US*. AND YOU GOT NO BIDNESS MESSIN' WID DA DOCKS!

I AIN'T DONE NUTHIN'! I DON'T KNOW NUTHIN'!

GET YOUR HAND OFF.

KRUMP!

K.O.AK

TOK!

THOK!

NO PISTOLS! YOU KNOW HOW *HE* GETS WHEN YOU TRY TO USE A PISTOL. SWEAR TO HEAVEN-- THE FIRST GUY PULLS A GUN I'LL SHOOT DEAD!

CRIK!

WHUMP

I WANT WORDS WITH MONTE WALSH.

ANYONE *ELSE* WANT TO REGISTER AN OBJECTION?

LUCKY SHAMROC
DELIVER

FWIT FWIT FWIT

HEY! YER STRETCHIN' THE MATERIAL!

KRASH!

OW!

AW, C'MAHN, BATS! YER NOT ANGRY, ARE YA?

YOU LEAVE WORD YOU HAVE INFORMATION FOR ME, MONTE, AND THEN YOU TRY TO GET MY CLOCK CLEANED. I DON'T LIKE BEING SET UP.

AHH, C'MAHN, BATS! JUST PROTECTIN' MYSELF A LI'L! YOU HIDE BEHIND THAT COWL--I HIDE BEHIND MY REP. SAME THING, AIN'T IT?

YOUR "REP" IS AS A SLIMY LITTLE SNITCH WHO'D SQUEAL ON HIS MOTHER IF THE PRICE WAS RIGHT.

I'M LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE DEATH OF THE ATOM -- RAY PALMER. WHAT DO YOU HAVE?

WORD COMIN' DOWN FROM GOVAMINT CIRCLES. THE WALL KNEW ABOUT THE EXPLOSION THAT KILLED PALMER *BEFORE* IT HAPPENED.

"THE WALL"? YOU MEAN-- *AMANDA WALLER?*

YEAH. AMANDA WALLER. HEADS THE *SUICIDE SQUAD.* SHE'S BACK OUT OF JAIL, IN CASE YOU DIDN'T KNOW, AND WORD SAYS SHE AND HER PEOPLE ARE *FREELANCE* NOW.

I KNOW ALL ABOUT IT. AND YOU'RE SAYING SHE HAD A HAND IN RAY PALMER'S DEATH?

ALL I KNOW IS WHAT I HEAR. HEY! AIN'TCHA GONNA LET ME LOOSE?!

ASK YOUR FELLOW VERMIN TO NIBBLE YOU FREE.

I HAVE SOME PEOPLE TO SEE.

HAS MARLO TALKED YET?

NO, *DIRECTOR*. HE'S WAITING FOR US TO MAKE OUR DEAL.

MARLO'S AN *INGRATE*. WE PROVIDED HIM WITH BASIC INFORMATION ON META-HUMAN RESEARCH. HE USES IT TO CREATE THIS *JIHAD* THAT LATER ATTACKS MANHATTAN!

CAN YOU IMAGINE HOW THE MEDIA WOULD TWIST THAT IF THEY GOT HOLD OF IT? THIS GOVERNMENT WOULD BE BLAMED FOR AN ATTACK ON ITS OWN PEOPLE!

THAT HAPPENED UNDER AN *EARLIER* ADMINISTRATION. IT FALLS TO *THIS* ONE TO MEND IT.

IN ANY CASE, THE EFFICACY OF THIS *CABAL* IS BASED ON NO ONE KNOWING OF OUR EXISTENCE. WE WILL FINISH WITH THIS AND THEN RESUME WORK ON THE *CHESSMEN AGENDA*.

METROPOLIS.

DAILY

COME ON, MR. SUPERHERO, TIME'S MONEY--AND THEY'RE NOT PAYING ME ENOUGH TO COOL MY HEELS UP HERE ALL AFTERNOON.

I'M RIGHT HERE.

HOLEE--!

SUPERMAN!

YOU WON'T BE NEEDING THAT. IT WOULDN'T DO YOU MUCH GOOD ANYWAY.

PRIVATE ADMITTANCE ONLY

ER, SORRY ABOUT THAT. I WAS EXPECTING A GRAND AERIAL ENTRANCE.

SOMETIMES IT'S BETTER TO BE DISCREET. I TAKE IT YOU ARE--

POLLARD. CBI.

YOUR IDENTIFICATION CHECKS OUT.

HOW DID YOU--? OH, RIIIIGHT. X-RAY VISION.

THAT'S WHAT THEY *CALL* IT. THE MESSAGE FROM YOUR PEOPLE SAID YOU NEED MY HELP, BUT ON THE Q.T.

YES. IT CONCERNS FORMER PRESIDENT MARLO OF QURAC, WHOM YOU HELPED BRING TO THIS COUNTRY FOR TRIAL.

SOURCES SUGGEST THERE WILL BE AN ATTEMPT TO EITHER RESCUE--OR KILL--MARLO OVER THE NEXT 36 HOURS.

THE SOURCE SAYS THE ATTEMPT WILL BE MADE BY THE *SUICIDE SQUAD*.

MR. POLLARD, FORGIVE ME IF I DON'T TAKE THIS CLOAK AND DAGGER RENDEZVOUS AS SERIOUSLY AS YOU DO.

BUT I CAME HERE IN GOOD FAITH AND FRANKLY YOU'VE WASTED MY TIME WITH RUMORS, NOT FACTS.

AND I WOULD DIVULGE THE SOURCE OF THIS INFORMATION IF I KNEW WHAT IT WAS. YOU OF ALL PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW.

ALL I CAN TELL YOU IS THAT THE SOURCES ARE SAID TO BE VERY RELIABLE.

YOU UNDERSTAND THE EFFORT THE UNITED STATES HAS MADE TO BRING MARLO TO JUSTICE. WILL YOU MAKE ANOTHER EFFORT TO HELP ASSURE HE REACHES TRIAL?

INSTITUTE FOR META-HUMAN STUDIES:

IMHS

THET'S *PALMER*. AH DON'T CARE WHUT THEY SAY--IT'S *PALMER*! IT'S *GOTTA* BE!

EASY, BLACKSNAKE! EVERYONE IN THE *MICRO FORCE* FEELS THE SAME WAY. WE HANDLE THIS BY THE NUMBERS AND WE *ALL* GET WHAT WE WANT!

AH WANT HIM *DEAD*! 'CAUSE O' HIM, I BEEN STUCK AT SIX INCHES HIGH FOR OVER A YEAR! AH *HATE* IT! AH HATE *HIM*!

AH SWEAR-- FIRST CHANCE I GIT, THE ATOM'S A *DEAD MAN*!

THE HOSPITAL WING OF *IMHS*.

H34

H34

SHE'LL BE ALL RIGHT, COUNT VERTIGO. SHE WAS ABUSED QUITE A BIT ON THAT ISLAND BUT NOTHING WAS SERIOUS. SHE'LL BE UP AND AROUND IN A DAY OR SO.

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR INFORMATION, DR. LAGRIEVE, BUT THAT WAS *NOT* MY CONCERN.

H33

I WAS DEBATING WHETHER TO KILL HER NOW OR WAIT UNTIL SHE HAD A FIGHTING CHANCE.

IT WON'T BE NOW, IN ANY CASE, BECAUSE I'M STANDING HERE AND I'M NOT ABOUT TO LET YOU.

BESIDES, THERE'S SOMETHING I THINK YOU SHOULD KNOW.

YOU ARE JUSTIFIABLY ANGRY WITH HER FOR THE WAY THAT SHE CONTROLLED YOUR WILL WITH HER POTIONS.

ESPECIALLY COMING AS IT DID UPON THE DRUGS THE SO-CALLED VLATAVAN FREEDOM FIGHTERS FED YOU TO BEND YOU TO *THEIR* WILL.

BUT THERE'S BEEN A CURIOUS SIDE EFFECT OF ALL THOSE DRUGS IN YOUR SYSTEM.

GIVEN YOUR META-HUMAN METABOLISM, THE HEAVY DOSAGES YOU RECEIVED BALANCED OUT THE CHEMICAL IMBALANCE IN YOUR BLOODSTREAM.

IN SHORT, THERE'S NO LONGER ANY *MEDICAL* REASON FOR YOUR MANIC-DEPRESSIVE STATE. IN THAT SENSE, YOU'VE BEEN *CURED*.

I DON'T BELIEVE THAT! EVEN NOW I FEEL MYSELF *STRUGGLING* WITH MY DISEASE...!

THE TESTS ARE CONCLUSIVE. HOWEVER, YOU STILL HAVE THE *HABIT* OF YOUR SICKNESS. YOU HAVE PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR THAT YOU'VE LIVED WITH ALL YOUR LIFE--THAT HAVE, TO A LARGE DEGREE, MADE UP WHO YOU ARE.

YOU NOW HAVE THE POSSIBILITY OF BEING TRULY *FREE* OF YOUR ILLNESS, DUE IN PART TO WHAT IVY DID TO YOU. THAT WAS NOT HER INTENTION, I KNOW, BUT SHE *HAS* DONE YOU SOME GOOD.

NOW *YOU* HAVE TO DECIDE WHAT SORT OF PERSON YOU'RE GOING TO BE. KILLING A WOMAN DOESN'T SEEM TO ME TO BE A GOOD PLACE TO START.

THINK ABOUT IT, OKAY?

YO. VERTIGO.

SO, YOU MAKE UP YOUR MIND YET WHETHER YOU WANT ME TO SNUFF YOU OR NOT?

NO, I ... IT'S A DIFFICULT DECISION, AS I'M SURE YOU MUST APPRECIATE. I JUST RECEIVED SOME INFORMATION THAT CASTS EVERYTHING INTO A NEW LIGHT.

SO WHEN DO YOU THINK YOU *WILL* KNOW?

WHY? IS YOUR *BLOODLUST* IMPATIENT, SIR?

NAW. WHAT YOU CHOOSE MAKES NO DIFFERENCE TO ME. BUT WE GOT A JOB COMING UP AND I DON'T WANT YOUR HEAD MOOKING IT UP.

I DON'T WANT TO GET KILLED ACCIDENTALLY BECAUSE *YOUR* HEAD'S NOT ON STRAIGHT.

OF ALL THE UNMITIGATED GALL! YOUR OWN HEAD, SIR, IS A *RAT'S NEST* AND YOU HAVE THE *EFFRONTERY* TO IMPUGN *MY* MENTAL STATE?!

IT'S *MY* HEAD. IF IT GETS ME KILLED, OKAY. I JUST DON'T WANT *YOUR* HEAD PROBLEMS ACING ME.

H 31

I SHALL *INFORM* YOU WHEN I HAVE DETERMINED MY COURSE! GOOD DAY!

H 33

YOU'RE LAWTON, RIGHT?

I'M ADAM CRAY. YOU KILLED MY FATHER.

THAT'S RIGHT.

EVERYONE I'VE KILLED HAD A FATHER.

MY FATHER WAS SENATOR CRAY.

YOUR FATHER WAS A CREEP. I'VE KILLED BETTER MEN THAN HIM. NO APOLOGIES.

I DIDN'T LIKE HIM, EITHER. IT DOESN'T MATTER. YOU HAD NO RIGHT TO KILL HIM.

YOU OWE ME, LAWTON. ME AND MY FAMILY. YOU OWE MY DAD.

OKAY. WHEN YOU FIGURE OUT WHAT I OWE AND HOW YOU WANT TO COLLECT IT, YOU BILL ME.

I'LL GIVE YOU ONE FREE SHOT. MAKE IT COUNT. YOU WON'T GET A SECOND.

LET'S GET TO THE PLANE. THE WALL GETS *TESTY* IF YOU'RE LATE TO ONE OF HER LITTLE MEETINGS.

BLOOD ISLAND.

AGNI HERE. I JUST SAW GOLEM ENTER A HUT. MY GUESS IS THAT MORE OF THE HAYOTH ARE HERE NOW.

ZIONIST METAHUMANS AND ARAB METAHUMANS-- ALL HERE FOR THE SAME MAN, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. ANY INSTRUCTIONS?

SNAP

WE WAIT. WE LET THEM MAKE THEIR MOVE. LET THE ISRAELIS DO THE HARD PART--THEN WE WILL TAKE MARLO FROM THEM. OUT.

NOW, YOU'RE SURE, MY LAD, THAT YOU DON'T MIND MY BEING NAMED THE NEW HEAD OF THE CAPTAINS OF INDUSTRY?

ARE YOU KIDDING? LISTEN, MAJOR VICTORY--I KNOW I'M GOOD BUT I ALSO KNOW I'M NEW. I'M RELIEVED THAT SOMEONE WHO KNOWS THE ROPES IS RUNNING THE GROUP NOW!

BENEFIT FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE, GET SOME SEASONING!

HEH! WELL, I'M SURE I CAN LEARN A THING OR TWO FROM YOU, SON...

AH, LITTLE BOYS IN SPANDEX!

STOP IT, GIRL.

SECURITY CLEARANCE LEVEL 1

BARBARA.

SECURITY CLEARANCE LEVEL 10

I'M NOT SURE WHO YOU *THINK* I AM, MR. BATMAN, BUT MY *NAME* IS *AMY BEDDOES* AND I'LL THANK YOU TO *USE* IT!

CAUTION: RADIO-ACTIVE MATERIAL

POINT TAKEN.

MAY I SPEAK TO YOU *PRIVATELY*, MS. BEDDOES?

COMLAB2

MY BAT-CAVE IS DOWN *THIS* WAY. YOU MAY ENTER *WITHOUT* A BLINDFOLD.

PSILAB 3

ONE SECOND... THERE. THAT SHOULD DISCOURAGE ANY WOULD-BE EAVES-DROPPERS.

IT STILL RANKLES YOU, DOESN'T IT--WHEN ROBIN OR I WOULD BLINDFOLD YOU BEFORE TAKING YOU TO THE BATCAVE.

OF COURSE IT DOES.

IT WAS ALL RIGHT FOR YOU TO KNOW WHO I WAS BUT NOT FOR ME TO SHARE IN *YOUR* TRUST

WOULD IT HELP IF I TOOK OFF MY COWL *NOW?*

THAT'S OKAY.

WHEN I REALLY *WANT* TO KNOW WHO YOU ARE, I'LL DIG IT UP. NOW, HOW CAN I HELP YOU?

I NEED TO TALK WITH WALLER.

SHE AND THE SQUAD ARE OUT ON A MISSION.

I KNOW THAT. I NEED TO KNOW WHERE.

SO YOU *SAY*. I NEED TO KNOW *WHY* YOU NEED TO KNOW.

I HAVE WORD THAT WALLER HAD A HAND IN THE EXPLOSION THAT KILLED RAY PALMER. I'M INVESTIGATING THAT EXPLOSION.

IS THAT REASON ENOUGH?

I KNOW YOU. ODDS ARE YOU HAVE AN *ALLEGATION* FROM AN UNNAMED SOURCE. DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER VERIFICATION? ANY OTHER EVIDENCE?

THAT'S WHY I'M HERE.

BATMAN, I'VE WORKED WITH WALLER. I'VE *MET* THE "NEW" ATOM-- WHO, BY THE WAY, HAS *NOT* CONVINCED ME HE *ISN'T* RAY PALMER-- AND I JUST DON'T BELIEVE WALLER WOULD DO WHAT YOU'RE SUGGESTING.

I *DO*. I'VE ALSO WORKED WITH HER.

I'VE HAD THE BODY IN PALMER'S GRAVE EXAMINED. THE BLAST DESTROYED HANDS AND FACE BUT I DID A TISSUE SAMPLE AND HAD IT ANALYZED. IT SHOWS CELLULAR STRESS CONSISTENT WITH SIZE CHANGING. NOW--WILL YOU TELL ME WHERE WALLER IS?

FISHING CREEK, MARYLAND.

CRAB CLAW MOTEL

NO VACANCY

OFFICE

ICE

OKAY, THAT'S THE PLAN. YOU ALL KNOW WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE. ANY *PERTINENT* QUESTIONS?

YOU MEAN, OUTSIDE OF *WHY* WE'RE DOING THIS?

BECAUSE IT'S WHAT WE HIRED OUT TO DO. ANY OF YOU GOT ANY PERSONAL, MORAL OR EXISTENTIAL PROBLEMS, YOU WORK THEM OUT ON YOUR OWN. YOU GOT THIRTY MINUTES BEFORE WE START.

NOW GET OUT OF HERE AND GET WHERE YOU NEED TO GO.

BANG.

STUPID GALAH...!

OI! CRAY! HALF A SEC, EH?

YEAH?

CRAB CLAW MOTEL

LISTEN, I UNDERSTAND THERE'S HARD FEELINGS BETWEEN YOU AND LAWTON OVER HOW HE KILLED YER OLD MAN.

SO?

LOOK, I DON'T BLAME YER AT ALL! I KNOW HOW I'D FEEL IF IT WAS *MY* OLD MAN.

LAWTON'S A LOONIE, DEAD CERT. MIGHT TAKE IT INTO HIS HEAD TO DO *YOU* NEXT. I MEAN, HE'S ALWAYS A LITTLE OFF HIS NUTTER, ISN'T HE?

IT'S LIKE THIS. HE HATES ME, TOO. BLAMES ME FOR HIS LUGGAGE GETTING LOST. CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?

THING IS--WELL, MISSIONS LIKE THESE, THEY'RE *DANGEROUS*. PEOPLE DON'T ALWAYS COME BACK FROM THEM, DO THEY?

WHAT'RE YOU SAYING?

I'M JUST SAYING IT MIGHT BE IN OUR MUTUAL SELF INTEREST TO MAKE SURE LAWTON DON'T COME BACK FROM *THIS* ONE.

GOTHAM.

RIGHT ON TIME. BOTH OF YOU. THAT'S GOOD.

AS WE AGREED AT RAY PALMER'S FUNERAL. HAVE YOU LEARNED ANYTHING ABOUT WHO WAS BEHIND IT?

I'VE HAD REPORTS THAT AMANDA WALLER AND THE SUICIDE SQUAD MAY BE INVOLVED.

THERE WERE REPORTS FROM JAPAN OF A SQUAD MISSION OVER THERE.

A *NEW* ATOM SHOWED UP AS PART OF THE SQUAD--A CONVICTED BURGLAR CALLED ADAM CRAY, SON OF THE LATE SENATOR CRAY, WHO WAS SHOT TO DEATH BY *DEADSHOT*, A MEMBER OF THE SQUAD.

I NOW HAVE UNCONFIRMED REPORTS THAT WALLER MAY HAVE KNOWN ABOUT THE BLAST THAT KILLED RAY *BEFORE* IT WENT OFF.

I'VE BEEN ASKED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO LEND A HAND. THEY BELIEVE THAT THE SQUAD IS ABOUT TO MAKE AN ATTEMPT TO KILL OR FREE FORMER PRESIDENT MARLO OF QURAC.

THAT JIBES WITH WHAT I'VE HEARD. I KNEW THEY WERE ON A MISSION BUT I DIDN'T KNOW *WHERE*.

BATMAN, LOOK, WE WERE RAY'S *FRIENDS*--HIS TEAMATES BACK WHEN THE JUSTICE LEAGUE JUST STARTED UP.

I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT EITHER THIS WALLER *OR* THE GROUP SHE RUNS WITH BUT I HAVEN'T VERY MUCH LIKED WHAT I'VE HEARD. MY QUESTION IS--ARE WE GOING TO *DO* SOMETHING ABOUT THIS OR NOT?

WE'RE GOING TO *DO* SOMETHING. NOW WE KNOW WHERE TO *LOOK* FOR WALLER, WE GO FIND HER.

AND THEN WE ASK WALLER--AND THIS NEW ATOM--SOME VERY *POINTED* QUESTIONS.

NEXT ISSUE: **DANGEROUS GAMES!** PART 2 OF LEGERDEMAIN!

LEGERDEMAIN

PART TWO: DANGEROUS GAMES

JOHN OSTRANDER/ KIM YALE: WRITERS
GEOF ISHERWOOD: PENCILLER
ROBERT CAMPANELLA: INKER
TODD KLEIN: LETTERER
TOM McCRAW: COLORIST
DAN RASPLER: EDITOR

BLOOD ISLAND, CHESAPEAKE BAY, MARYLAND.

READY.

WAIT FOR THE SIGNAL.

TOK!

TETRAGRAMMATON! ADNI! EHEIEH! AGLA! LET BRIAH, THE WATER, KNOW THE KISS OF YETZIRAH, THE AIR! LET VAPORS ARISE!

<GO NOW.>

CLEVER. THE ZIONIST MAGICIAN IS SENDING IN A FOG COVER. I CAN NO LONGER SEE THEM.

WHAT COVERS THEM COVERS YOU. SIGNAL THE BADB AND GET GOING. I'LL COMMUNICATE WITH *PISCATOR*.

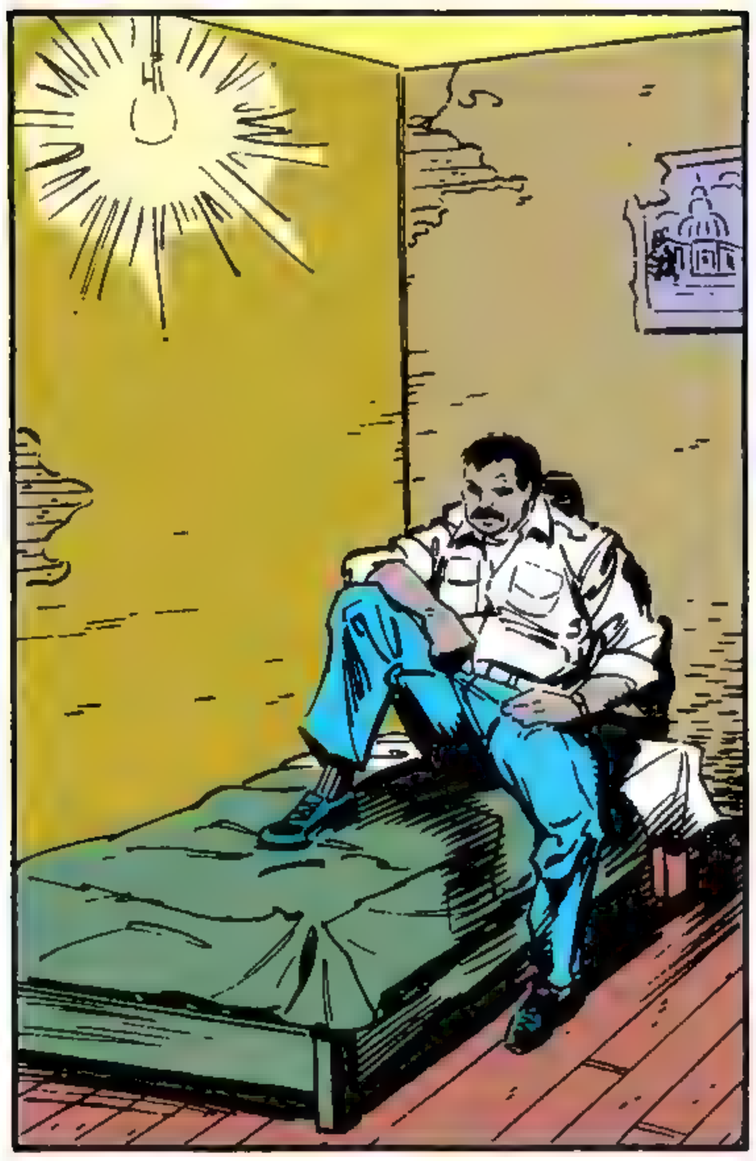
LET THE HAYOTH TAKE MARLO; THEN YOU TAKE MARLO FROM THE HAYOTH.

BOY, THIS FOG GOT THICK ALL OF A SUDDEN! I CAN'T SEE A DURN THING!

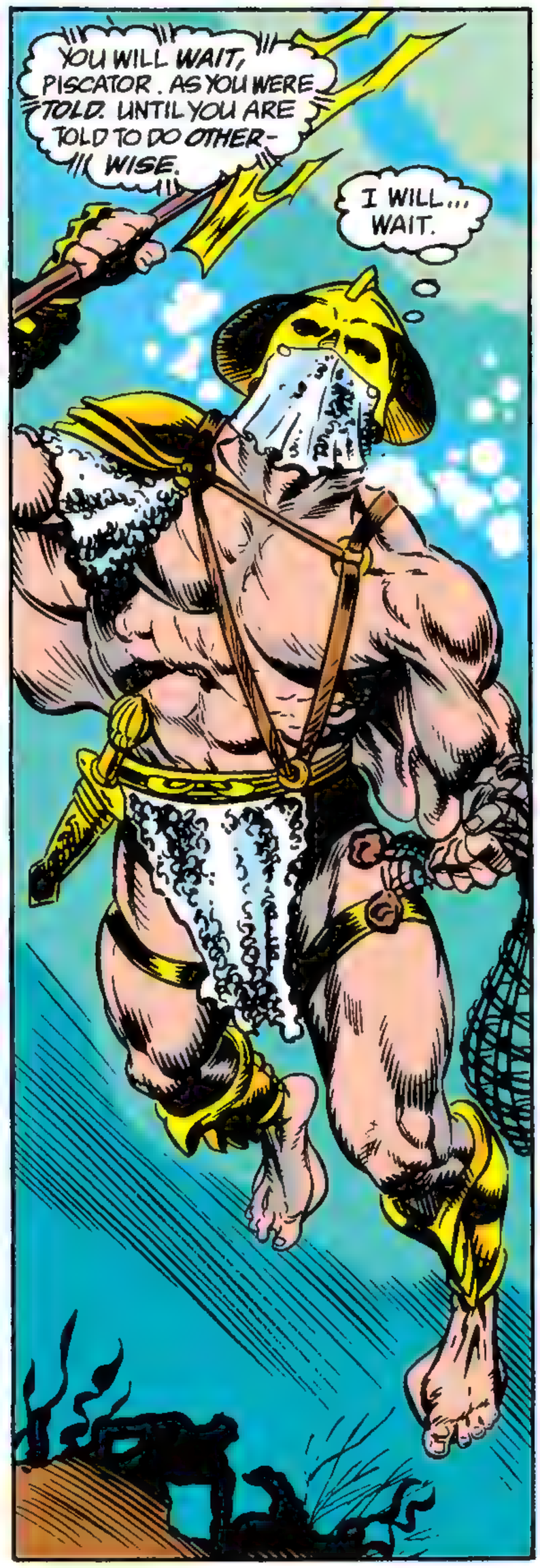
DON'T WORRY, SOLDIER.

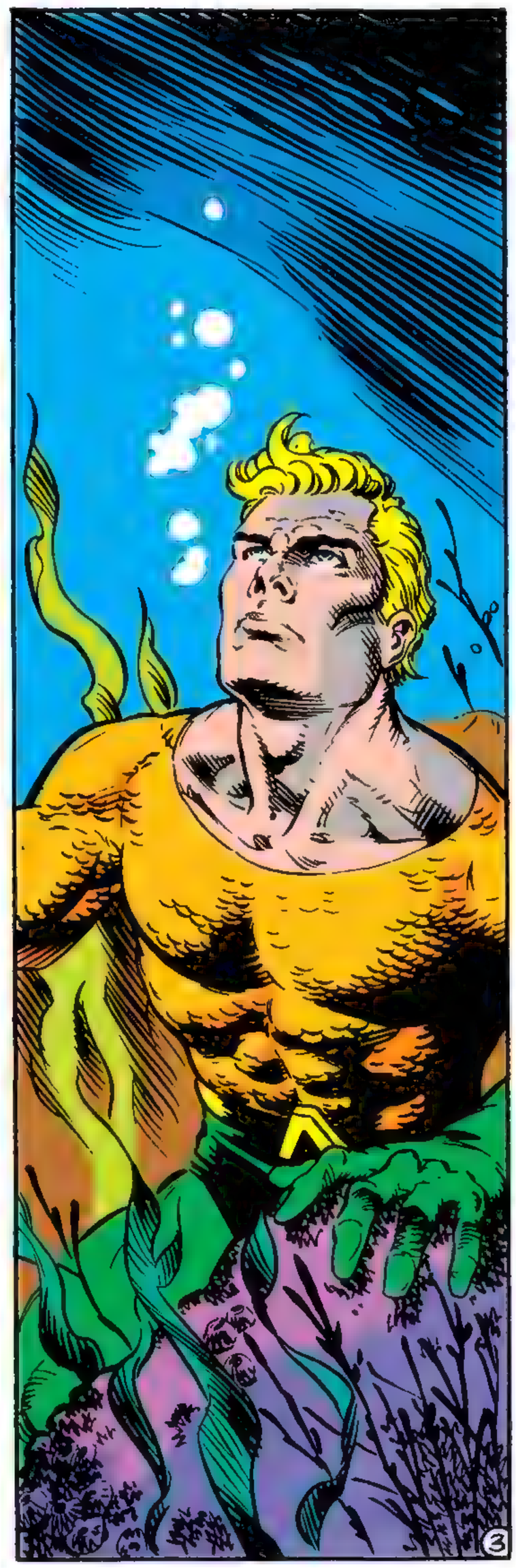
I CAN SEE JUST FINE.

MP



I'M IN POSITION. I CAN SEE THE HAYOTH MAGICIAN--RAMBAN. I COULD KILL HIM EASILY NOW.


YOU WILL WAIT, PISCATOR. AS YOU WERE TOLD. UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO OTHER-WISE.
I WILL... WAIT.


3

A SIDE GATE...

U.S. ARMY

WAAAA-AHEUH-AHEUH!

WHAT THE HECK IS THIS?

WAAA-HC-WAAA!

LITTLE GIRL, WHAT ARE YOU *DOING* HERE? HOW'D YOU *GET* HERE?

I WAS WITH ME MUM AND PA AN' WE WAS IN THE SAILBOAT AN' ALL WITH ME LI'L BROTHER AN' WE CRASHED INTA SOME *ROCKS* AN'... AN'... AN'...!

AN' I'M THINKING IT WOULD BE FUN TO PEEL YUR MIND!

AH, SO IT'S DEATH BY *SUFFOCATIN'* YE FEAR MOST, IS IT? AN' ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU'RE EXPERIENCIN' *NOW?*

'AT'S *FUNNY*, MISTER! AIR ALL ABOUT YA AND YOU CAN NO TAKE A BREATH. CAN YE?

FUMP

HULLO. BADB HERE. I GOT TH' DOORWAY. IT WAS DEAD EASY--AN' FUN BESIDES.

GOOD WORK. MAINTAIN YOUR POSITION AND HOLD THE GATE. WE MAY NEED IT.

YOU ARE *NOT* BEING VERY HELPFUL ON THIS MATTER, *DYBBUK!*

IT GRIEVES ME TO DISAPPOINT YOU, COLONEL. HOWEVER, I MUST QUESTION THE ETHICAL BASIS OF WHAT WE ARE DOING. SHOULD WE NOT BE ACTING IN CONCERT WITH OUR AMERICAN ALLIES?

OUR AMERICAN COUSINS MAY HAVE *SUPPLIED* MARLO WITH THE DATA HE NEEDED TO CREATE HIS *JIHAD*. IS THIS A FRIENDLY ACT? TO FOSTER *META-HUMAN* TERRORISTS ON OUR DOORSTEP?

AND NOW WE HEAR OTHERS--SUCH AS THE *SUICIDE SQUAD*--ARE OUT TO KIDNAP OR *SILENCE* MARLO.

NO. MUCH BETTER *WE* HOLD MARLO.

I KNOW YOU ARE EXPLORING NEW ETHICAL PARAMETERS, DYBBUK, BUT I PROMISE YOU--YOU WILL EITHER START AIDING THE HAYOTH AGAIN OR I WILL PURGE YOUR ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE OF ITS ARTIFICIAL PERSONALITY AND START ALL OVER AGAIN!

WHEN I GIVE THE SIGNAL, HIT THE SPOTLIGHTS, OKAY?

UH...OKAY, BUT IT WON'T DO MUCH GOOD IN THIS *FOG*, SUPERMAN.

THE FOG'S ABOUT TO LIFT.

MP

WHOOO

WHOOOOO

WHOOOOOOO

NOW. HIT THE LIGHTS.

OY.

PROBLEM. SUPERMAN AND BATMAN HAVE SHOWN UP AND ARE ABOUT TO ENGAGE THE HAYOTH.

ALTERNATE PLAN IS IN EFFECT. AGNI, YOU WILL FREE MARLO WHILE ATTENTION IS DIVERTED ELSEWHERE. THE BADB WILL KEEP THE EXIT OPEN FOR YOU WHILE PISCATOR ELIMINATES THE MAGICIAN. GO!

I RECOGNIZE YOU FROM YOUR FILE. CODENAME: *JUDITH*. ISRAELI NINJA ASSIGNED TO THE *HAYOTH*, THE META-HUMAN DIVISION OF THE MOSSAD.

YOU'RE NOT QUITE WHO I EXPECTED. I'D SUGGEST SURRENDERING YOUR WEAPONS SO WE CAN DISCUSS THIS INTRUSION INTO AMERICAN AFFAIRS.

FWIP FWIP FWIP FWIP

KRASH!

SWSSH

SOMETHING IS SERIOUSLY AMISS...

YOU'LL SPEAK NO SPELL DOWN HERE, MAGICIAN!

HE WON'T NEED TO.

AH! SEA KING! I SALUTE YOU! YOU ARE A FOE WORTHY OF MY STEEL!

I TAKE IT YOU'RE A TELEPATH-- WHATEVER *ELSE* YOU ARE. WHAT PART DO YOU HAVE IN THIS ASSAULT? ARE YOU PART OF THE SUICIDE SQUAD?

NO, NO. I AM *PISCATOR*-- A *JANISSARY*. I HIRE OUT TO... CERTAIN MIDDLE EASTERN GOVERNMENTS. I AM HERE FOR *MARLO* OF QURAC AND THE MAGICIAN STOOD IN MY WAY.

AS, AT THE MOMENT, DO YOU.

I AM SORRY FOR THIS INTRUSION, SUPERMAN. BELIEVE ME, I HAVE A *GREAT* DEAL OF RESPECT FOR YOU BUT, IF YOU DO NOT BACK OFF, I WILL BE FORCED TO *MAKE* YOU DO SO.

INTRIGUING TRANSFORMATION, FRIEND. BUT WHILE YOU MAY BE A *CONCRETE* SORT OF GUY...

...I'M THE ONE THEY CALL THE *MAN OF STEEL!*

BAKOW!

IT *GRIEVES* ME DEEPLY TO DO THIS, SUPERMAN. PERHAPS IF YOU ALLOWED US TO WITHDRAW...

KROK!

...BUT THEN YOU WOULDN'T BE THE HERO YOU ARE IF YOU DID, WOULD YOU?

AHOOGA! AHOOGA!

<IT BEGINS.>

<PLEASE, STAND AWAY FROM THE CELL DOOR, MR. PRESIDENT. THERE HAS BEEN A CHANGE OF PLANS.>

SNAP!

FWOOMP!

FOOM!

KWAROOM!

<THIS WAY, PLEASE, MR. PRESIDENT. MIND THE EDGES OF THE METAL-- THEY ARE QUITE HOT.>

<THIS WAY, SIR. QUICKLY NOW. WE NEED TO MAKE GOOD OUR ESCAPE WHILE THE AMERICANS AND ISRAELIS ARE PUMMELING EACH OTHER.>

HSSSSSH!

THUF

CHOK!

CHUD!

WHUNT!

WHAUK!

KRAUK!

"WE WILL STRIKE *QUICKLY*," THE COLONEL SAYS! "WE WILL BE IN AND GONE BEFORE THEY HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT HAS HAPPENED," THE COLONEL SAYS!

I HAVE SOME WORDS FOR *YOU*, COLONEL.

CHERUBIM SUSTAIN ME!

SPLOOSH!

HOW ARE THE AMERICANS AND THE ISRAELIS?

IT'S A GREAT LAUGH. THEY'RE BETTER THAN THE CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS BACK HOME IN BELFAST. IS HE WITH YOU, THEN?

AH, THERE'S HIMSELF. WERE YOU AFRAID WE WOULDN'T COME AFTER YOU LIKE WE SAID? I BET YOU WERE!

NO.

WERE YOU NOT, THEN? I CAN SEE, YOU KNOW.

HOLD ON! YOU... YOU'RE NOT...!

WHUNT!

WHOK!

:CLICK:

PSSSST!

NEMESIS HERE. COVER'S BEEN BLOWN--TWO OF THE JIHAD CAME TO "RESCUE" MARLO AND I HAD TO PUT THEM BOTH DOWN.

WE HAVE GOT PROBLEMS.

KRUNK!

I HAVE AN *ARGUMENT* WITH THAT NOTION, FRIEND!

SCHRAAK!

FRAKK!

<GOLEM! HELP JUDITH! WE'RE WITHDRAWING IMMEDIATELY!>

PK OW

I THINK WE'D ALL BETTER *TALK*.

SHORTLY THEREAFTER...

WHAT I AM TELLING TO YOU IS TRUE! OUR CONTACTS LED US TO BELIEVE AMERICA WOULD LOOK THE OTHER WAY WHILE WE CAME AND GOT HIM! THIS IS THE TRUTH!

SARGE STEEL ASKED ME TO IMPERSONATE MARLO WHILE THEY HID HIM ELSEWHERE. NOT EVEN THE MEN ON THE BASE WERE INFORMED.

WHERE IS MARLO NOW?

I DON'T KNOW. THEY DIDN'T TELL ME.

BUT HOW IS THIS CONNECTED TO THE DEATH OF RAY PALMER?! WE'RE HERE BECAUSE THE SUICIDE SQUAD ALLEGEDLY KNOWS SOMETHING ABOUT RAY'S DEATH AND THEY WERE SUPPOSEDLY COMING HERE TO DO SOMETHING TO OR FOR MARLO!

SO WHERE'S THE SUICIDE SQUAD?

THAT'S WHAT'S BEEN BOTHERING ME ALL *THROUGH* THIS! NO SQUAD!

WHERE *ARE* THEY? WHAT ARE THEY *UP* TO?

MORE IMPORTANT-- WHAT IS *WALLER* UP TO?

OKAY-- ACTIVATE HIM NOW.

YEH-HESSSSS!

OKAY, CARMICHAEL. YOU GET THE INFORMATION I ASKED FOR. TRY ANYTHING ELSE AND I'LL SCATTER YOUR BRAIN ACROSS THAT WALL, MICROCHIPS AND ALL. SAVVY?

HI THERE.

YOU'RE GOING TO TALK TO ME. YOU'RE GOING TO TELL ME EVERYTHING I WANT TO KNOW. WE'RE BOSOM BUDDIES, YOU AND ME.

TALK TO ME, PAL. TELL ME ABOUT *THE CABAL*.

NEXT: **SNAFU**--AS ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE SQUAD *DIES*...!

LEGERDEMAIN

PART 3: SNAFU

YES. YOU ARE MY FRIEND. I WILL TELL YOU ABOUT THE CABAL.

A REPRESENTATIVE COMES TO ME, SEVERAL YEARS AGO. THEY KNOW OF QURAC'S EXPERIMENTS INTO *META-HUMANS*. THEY TELL ME THEY HAVE INFORMATION THEY WILL SHARE WITH QURAC IF WE WILL SHARE THE RESULTS OF OUR EXPERIMENTS.

I SMILE GENIALLY, MAKE LASTING PROMISES. I DON'T TELL THEM THE EXPERIMENTS WILL RESULT IN A GROUP OF META-HUMAN POWERED TERRORISTS -- IN WHAT BECOMES THE *JIHAD*.

JOHN OSTRANDER / KIM YALE: WRITERS
GEOF ISHERWOOD: PENCILLER
ROBERT CAMPANELLA: INKER
TODD KLEIN: LETTERER
TOM McCRAW: COLORIST
DAN RASPLER: EDITOR

BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE / SUPERMAN CREATED BY SIEGEL & SHUSTER

FASCINATING! TELL ME MORE, OLD BUDDY!

...YES... I WILL TELL YOU MORE...

THE CABAL... IS PART OF... AMERICAN GOVERNMENT. MILITARY, INDUSTRIAL... CIA... FBI...

HOW ABOUT THE PRESIDENT OR THE CONGRESS? THEM, TOO?

C'MON! YOU CAN TELL *ME*! WHO'S YOUR BUDDY? HUH? WHO'S YOUR PAL? IT'S *ME*, RIGHT? SURE IT IS!

YES. YOU ARE MY... "BUDDY".

YOU KNOW IT! BUT, TELL ME, BUDDY--WHY IS THIS *CABAL* SO OBSESSED WITH META-HUMANS?

IT IS *HER* FAULT!

MY FAULT?!

YES! THE CABAL LOOKS AT YOU, AT YOUR SUICIDE SQUAD, AND SAY, "SHE HAS THE RIGHT IDEA BUT DOES NOT TAKE IT FAR ENOUGH."

THIS COUNTRY IS SO STUPID! IN OTHER NATIONS, IN QURAC, WE DID NOT ALLOW META-HUMANS TO PUT ON MASKS AND DO WHATEVER THEY WANTED!

WE KNOW WHO THEY ARE! WE CONTROL THEM!

YOU, AMANDA WALLER, HAVE THE RIGHT IDEA. BUT YOU USE ONLY CRIMINAL META-HUMANS!

THE SUPERMAN. THE BATMAN. HOW EFFECTIVE COULD THEY BE IF CONTROLLED... COMPELLED TO WORK FOR YOUR NATIONAL INTERESTS, IF YOUR GOVERNMENT KNEW WHO THEY WERE!

SO THAT'S WHY SOME OF THE CIA WENT TO ALL THE TROUBLE OF TRYING TO GET RAY PALMER. IF THEY'D JUST WANTED A MINIATURE AGENT, JUST STEAL THE SPARE SIZE-CHANGING BELT HE LEFT WITH HIS EX-WIFE.

PALMER BELONGED TO THE JUSTICE LEAGUE. HE WAS FRIENDS WITH ALL OF THEM. THEY WANTED WHAT HE KNEW ABOUT THE OTHER META-HUMANS. EVEN IF HE DIDN'T KNOW ALL THEIR REAL IDENTITIES, HE'D KNOW ENOUGH.

BUT WHY DID THEY TELL YOU ALL THIS? I MEAN, I WOULDN'T TRUST YOU WITH IT.

THEY DO NOT. NOR DO I TRUST *THEM*. SO I SUBORN MY CONTACT PERSON WITH MONEY, WITH WOMEN. I MAKE HIM MY FRIEND AND HE TELLS ME.

INSURANCE AGAINST A DAY LIKE THIS. FIGURED IT'D MAKE THEM CUT YOU LOOSE. EVER DAWN ON YOU THAT THEY'D PREFER TO CUT YOUR *THROAT*?

STILL--IT'S WORTH KNOWING YOUR CONTACT WEARS A BIG PRICE TAG. WHICH BRINGS US TO THE *BIG* QUESTION--WHAT IS THIS PERSON'S *NAME*?

YOU CAN TAKE YOURSELF TO WHATEVER HELL THAT SPAWNED YOU, YOU FAT--!

NOW, NOW. BE *NICE*, MARLO. REMEMBER YOUR MANNERS AND ANSWER THE FAT LADY. BE NICE AND POLITE AND *TELL* HER WHO THE CONTACT IS.

HE IS... HIS NAME IS...

McCLELLAN. MAJOR GEORGE A. McCLELLAN. AIR FORCE.

THANK YOU, EL PRESIDENTE!

NOW--FOR YOUR *NEXT* TRICK--WHY DON'T YOU SWALLOW YOUR TONGUE AND CHOKE TO DEATH ON IT?

GUUUKK!

GLAAAK!

STOP IT, CARMICHAEL! AND I MEAN NOW!

NO! I'VE BEEN A GOOD BOY! I'VE DONE WHAT YOU WANTED! NOW I GET TO HAVE SOME FUN!

BLAM!

HEY!

GUKK

DON'T TEST ME, CARMICHAEL. I'M NOT THAT GOOD A SHOT.

ORACLE. WALLER HERE. PUT THE DAMPERS BACK ON THE THINKER. HE'S GETTING FRISKY.

KOFF KOFF!

DAMPERS ON. BY THE WAY, BATMAN WAS HERE EARLIER LOOKING FOR YOU.

HE HAS INFORMATION TYING YOU TO RAY PALMER'S DEATH. HE'S LOOKING FOR YOU VERY, VERY HARD.

AND HE'S A MAN WHO TENDS TO FIND WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR.

CAN YOU PATCH ME INTO NIGHTSHADE?

"SHE'S ALREADY SAID THERE'S BEEN A DISTURBANCE OF SOME SORT AND SHE'S GOING IN FOR A CLOSER LOOK."

...SO THERE'S MORE THAN ONE GROUP INVOLVED. WHATEVER STEEL IS UP TO, KILLING MARLO ISN'T A PART OF IT. OTHERWISE, MARLO WOULD'VE BEEN DEAD.

THE JIHAD'S NOT A PART OF IT; THEY'RE MARLO'S PEOPLE AND HERE TO RESCUE HIM. SO --

-- WHO WANTS HIM DEAD AND WHY? WHY DID STEEL KIDNAP HIM?

COLONEL HACOHEN, YOU SAID YOU WANT MARLO BECAUSE OF KNOWLEDGE OF DIRTY DEALS BETWEEN HIS GOVERNMENT AND OURS. MY SOURCES SUGGEST IT CONCERNS MARLO'S META-HUMAN TERRORISTS -- HIS JIHAD.

TOM. DON'T TURN AROUND. IT'S ME.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

WHAT *DIDN'T*? THE HAYOTH AND THE REMAINS OF THE JIHAD BOTH CAME FOR MARLO AND THE THREE BIG NAMES WERE WAITING FOR THEM. *SOMEBODY'S* STACKING THE DECK. BET IT'S YOUR *CABAL*.

RAY PALMER, IN HIS LAST BOOK, WROTE ABOUT A BAND OF RENEGADE CIA AGENTS WHO TRIED TO RECRUIT HIM INTO THE AGENCY AND DESTROYED THE RACE OF MINIATURE ALIENS HE LIVED WITH IN THE AMAZON.

IN REVENGE, HE SHRANK THE FIVE RESPONSIBLE DOWN TO SIX INCHES. SUPPOSEDLY, THEY'RE STILL WORKING FOR THE GOVERNMENT. DO YOU SEE THE COMMON LINK HERE? YOUR HAYOTH, MARLO'S JIHAD, THE *CIA'S* LILLIPUTIAN AGENTS --

WHAT WAS IT YOU JUST CALLED THEM, NEMESIS? THE CABAL?

SNARRLLLL

GROWWLLL

WHUD

CHUD

WHOMP!

TZEE TZEE TZEE

KRASHA!

VOMP!

WELL, SHE'S A NEW ONE ON ME. I THOUGHT I HAD HER AND SHE WAS GONE.

HER NAME'S NIGHT-SHADE. SHE CAN CREATE A DIMENSIONAL TUNNEL THROUGH WHICH TO TRAVEL-- ALTHOUGH HER OTHER POWERS ARE NEW TO ME.

SHE'S WORKED WITH WALLER IN THE PAST. EVIDENTLY, SHE IS AGAIN.

EVIDENTLY, SO ARE YOU, NEMESIS.

I WANT SOME ANSWERS.

NIGHTSHADE TO THE WALL. WE HAVE PROBLEMS.

WELL, *THIS* IS SPECIAL.

ALL RIGHT, GIRL-- GET TO THE RENDEZ-VOUS. DON'T WORRY ABOUT TRESSER. THESE ARE THE GOOD GUYS. THEY AREN'T GOING TO HURT HIM AND WE'LL PATCH IT ALL UP LATER.

NICE TO SEE THIS IS SLOWLY TURNING INTO YOUR ***NORMAL*** SQUAD-TYPE MISSION-- ALL FOULED UP.

IF YOU'RE GOING TO GET ALL ***NERVOUS***, STEEL, MAYBE YOU SHOULD HAVE KEPT THIS LITTLE CLAMBAKE ***IN HOUSE*** INSTEAD OF HIRING ***US***.

WE GOT A LIVE CONTACT-- THIS ***MAJOR McCLELLAN***. ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS FIND HIM AND GET TO HIM BEFORE THE ***CABAL*** DOES.

WE ***HAVE*** TO ASSUME BY NOW THAT THEY ***KNOW*** WE SWITCHED MARLO.

IF I ***COULD*** HAVE, I ***WOULD*** HAVE. BUT WHEN I STARTED LEARNING ABOUT THIS ***CABAL***, I DIDN'T KNOW HOW FAR IT WENT. AND WE ***STILL*** DON'T!

"THEY AREN'T THE KIND TO LEAVE LOOSE ENDS. McCLELLAN'S AN ENDANGERED SPECIES."

YES, DIRECTOR. I QUITE AGREE. A SMALL FORCE SHOULD BE ADEQUATE IF WE MOVE HARD AND FAST. I'LL GET RIGHT ON IT.

NO, I SEE NO REASON NOT TO GO FORWARD WITH THE OTHER PART OF OUR PLAN. YES, I KNOW IT COULD BE PART OF WALLER'S TRAP BUT IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER.

WHAT SHE PLANS AND WHAT SHE ACCOMPLISHES ARE OFTEN TWO DIFFERENT THINGS. BESIDES, WE'VE WORKED VERY HARD AND VERY LONG AT THIS.

GEN. WADE EILING

"IF ALL GOES ACCORDING TO PLAN, IN A FEW MINUTES, THE ATOM WILL BE *OURS*."

IF YOU'RE CLEAR ON THE DRILL, LET'S HAVE A DEKKO, EH?

A WHAT?

A LOOK. BLOODY HELL!

WHY DON'T YOU JUST SPEAK *AMERICAN*?

FWIP FWIP FWIP

KLOP!

TEK

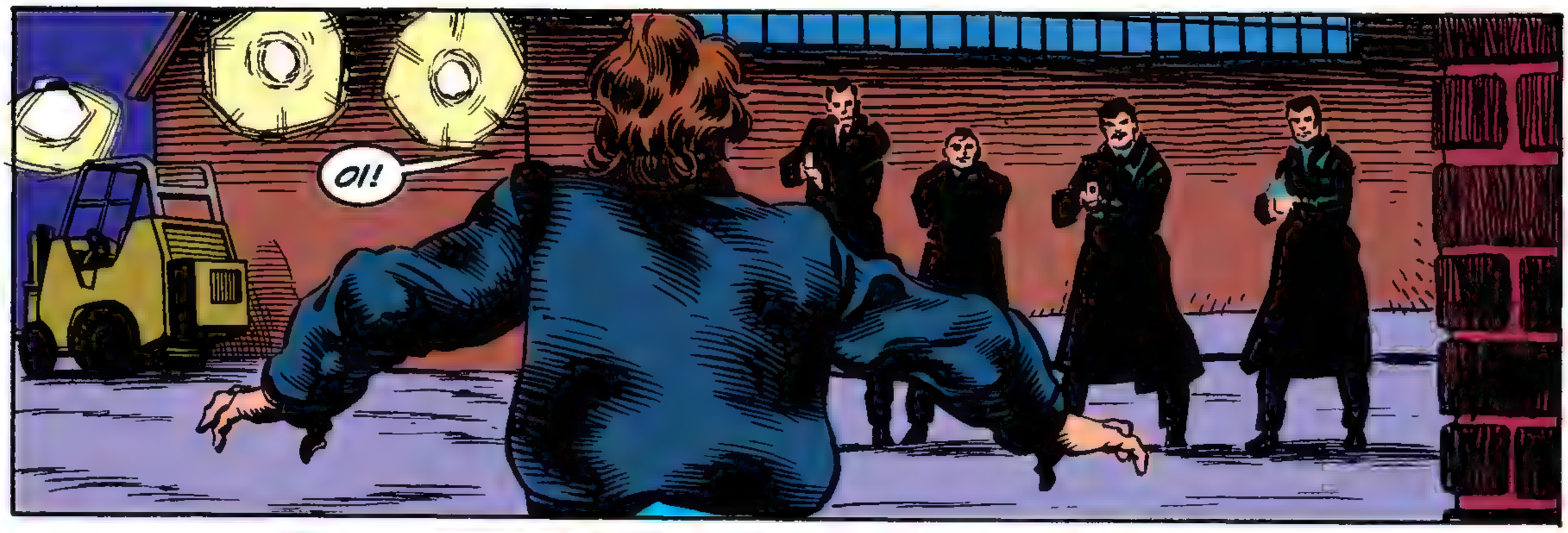
AH, THERE YOU ARE, ME LITTLE BEAUTIES. I TRUST THE HALF MILLION IS IN THE PRIVATE SWISS ACCOUNT AS WE AGREED?

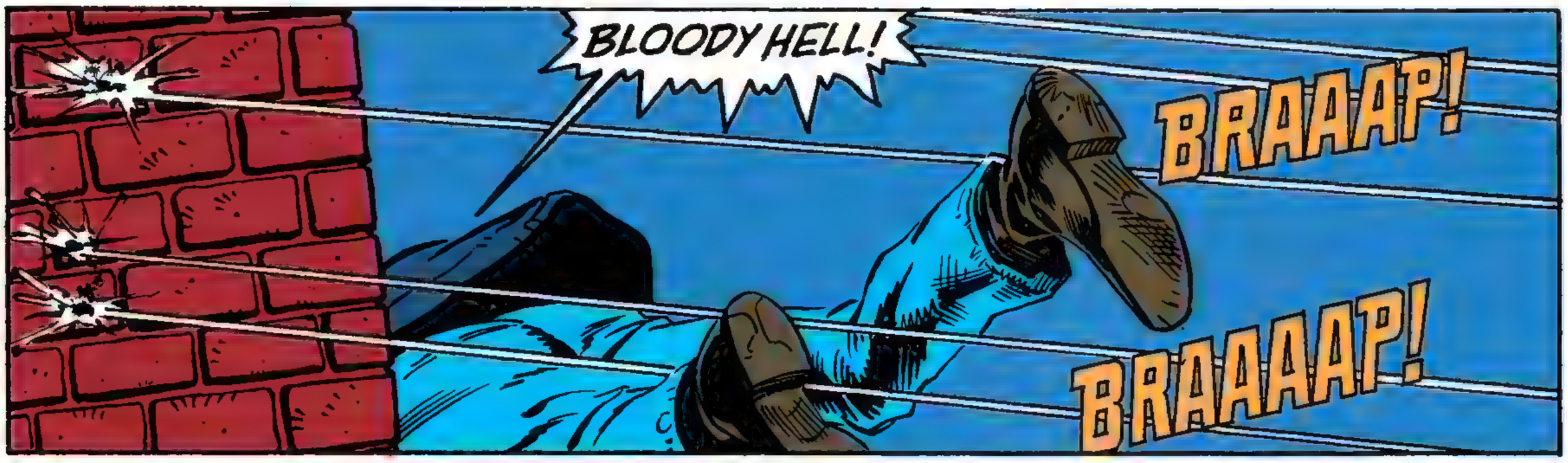
YES.

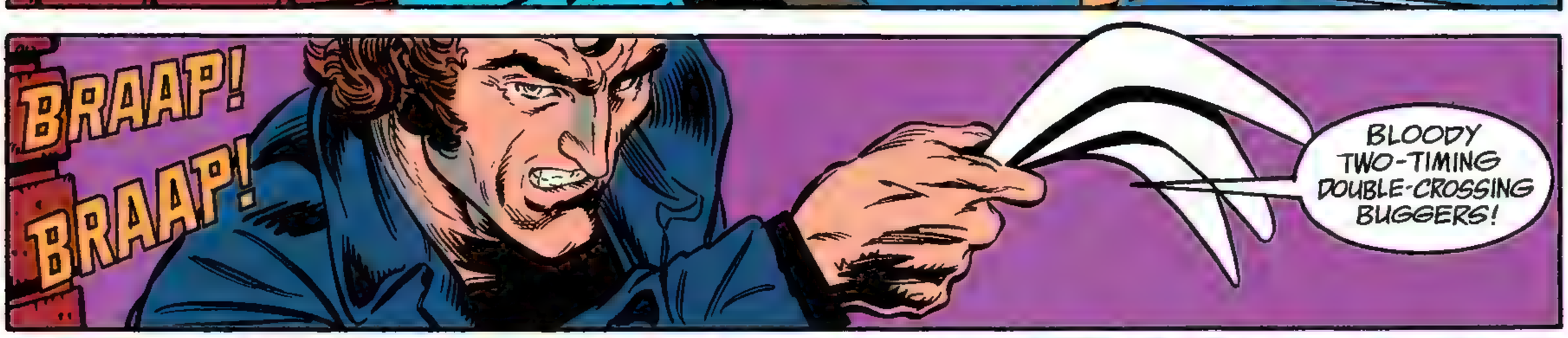
BEAUTY! YOU AND YOUR MOB HAVE ANOTHER LURK, GIVE US A CALL, EH?

ESS

CSM
INDUSTRIES


OI!


BLOODY HELL!
BRAAAP!
BRAAAAP!
BRAAP!
BRAAP!
BLOODY TWO-TIMING DOUBLE-CROSSING BUGGERS!


BRADOOOM!
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP

THUNK!

GUK!

OI! CAPTAIN BOOMERANG TO THE WALL! THE BUGGERS JUST TRIED TO KILL ME!

DID THEY SUCCEED?

OH, HO, HO, HO, WALL. BUST MY GUT.

IF YOU AREN'T DEAD, THEN YOU'RE OKAY. THEY TAKE THE ATOM?

YEAH YEAH YEAH.

THEN EVERYTHING'S GOING ACCORDING TO PLAN. GET TO THE RENDEZVOUS POINT. NIGHTSHADE WILL PICK YOU UP. WE GOT PLACES TO GO AND *LOTS* TO DO. WALLER OUT.

WHUNT

OI! I WONDER IF THIS MEANS THEY *STIFFED* ME ON THE HALF MILLION?!

WELL, I FOUND OUT WHERE McCLELLAN IS CURRENTLY STATIONED.

UH-OH. I DON'T LIKE THAT LOOK ON YOUR FACE, STEEL. I'M REALLY GOING TO HATE THIS, AREN'T I?

LET'S SEE -- WHAT'S THE *WORST* POSSIBLE PLACE FOR HIM TO BE LOCATED? PENTAGON? NORAD HQ? OR...

BLOOD ISLAND

OF COURSE. *SOMEONE* WAS LIAISON FOR AGNI AND THE OTHERS. THE CABAL WOULD HAVE WANTED HIM AS CLOSE TO MARLO AS POSSIBLE.

THE *ONE* PLACE THAT HAS NOT ONLY ARMY UNITS BUT SUPERMAN, BATMAN, AND AQUAMAN ALL LOOKING FOR THE SQUAD ANYWAY--*THAT'S* WHERE WE'RE SUPPOSED TO GO!

BAM!

McCLELLAN'LL *KNOW* BY NOW THAT MARLO WAS SWITCHED. HE'S GOT TO FIGURE HE WAS COMPROMISED. HE'LL BE RABBITING. HE'S OUR ONE CHANCE TO GET *CLOSE* TO THE CABAL--YOU'VE *GOT* TO SEND YOUR PEOPLE IN.

"MAYBE, BUT I WARN YOU, STEEL-- ON *THIS* ONE, SOMEONE'S *BOUND* TO WIND UP *DEAD!*"

ARE THESE THE PRISONERS WHO TRIED TO RESCUE *MARLO?*

THEY ARE, MAJOR McCLELLAN.

THEY'RE JUST WHO I WANT, THEN.

BLAM!

RIGHT. YOU FREE THE OTHERS, AGNI, AND THEN WE NEED A SURPRISE ATTACK ON HANGAR 14. THAT'S WHERE THEY'RE HOLDING THE *REAL* MARLO. THE SWITCH WAS A SURPRISE TO ME AS WELL.

A LIGHTNING STRIKE AND WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO GET CLEAR WITH YOUR PRESIDENT YET.

ACTUALLY, WHILE YOU CREATE A DIVERSION, I'LL SLIP AWAY TO THAT BOAT WE HAD WAITING FOR MARLO OUT AT SEA.

SO SORRY TO ABUSE YOUR TRUST LIKE THIS, DEAR FRIENDS, BUT I HAVE NO INTENTION OF EXCHANGING MY DOG TAGS FOR A TOE TAG IN THE NEXT HALF-HOUR. BETTER *YOU* THAN ME!

CLEAR SO FAR. REMEMBER--AVOID THE *BIG THREE* IF AT ALL POSSIBLE. JUST FIND AND NAIL McCLELLAN BEFORE THE CABAL DOES. WE DON'T HAVE TO GET HIM *OUT*--WE JUST HAVE TO GET TO HIM *FIRST!*

OH, TURN IT UP! WE'RE ONLY INVADING A MILITARY BASE JAMMED WITH META-HUMANS WHO ARE NONE TOO FOND OF *US*, LOOKING FOR A GALAH WHO COULD BE ANYWHERE, AND HE WANTS US TO BE *CAREFUL*. TOO RIGHT ABOUT THAT, MATE!

COUNT, YOU'RE THE RESERVE. YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO IF WE NEED IT. LET'S *MOVE* IT, PEOPLE.

MAJOR MCCLELLAN?

WHUPS!

I'M SORRY, SIR, BUT IT'S HIGHLY PROBABLE YOU'VE BEEN COMPROMISED. GENERAL EILING HAS DIRECTED WE TERMINATE YOU.

OPEN FIRE, MEN!

BRAAAAP! BRAAAP! BRAP!

FORGET TRESSER FOR THE MOMENT. EITHER HE REALLY DOESN'T KNOW MORE THAN HE SAYS OR HE WON'T SAY.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE TERRORISTS HE CAPTURED? THEY *HAD* TO HAVE A CONTACT PERSON-- PERHAPS ON THIS BASE. THEY'RE NOT WITH WALLER. PERHAPS A FEW QUESTIONS TO *THEM* WOULD...

CONVERGE ON THE SHOTS. LET'S GO.

<THIS WAY.>

BLAM
BLAM
BRAAP
BRAAP
ViP
ViP
ViP
THERE! TAKE THE HIT TEAM! McCLELLAN IS MINE!
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP
BLAM
BLAM
KRAK
IS THIS--?
YES, THIS IS THE SUICIDE SQUAD.
NO! WAIT!
16

I DON'T THINK SO. THOSE ARE AMERICAN SOLDIERS YOU'RE ATTACKING AND I'M NOT ABOUT TO LET YOU DO THAT.

IF YOU WANT TO TALK--SURRENDER. WE'LL TALK. BUT THIS FIGHT IS OVER.

FINE. YOU WANT TO TELL *THEM*?

<NOW, COMRADES, WE FACE A *FAIR* FIGHT!>

THIS, I BELIEVE, IS THE MOMENT FOR THE "RESERVES" IS IT NOT?

WE'VE FOUGHT BEFORE.

AND I KICKED YOUR BUTT. YOU WANT TO GET OUT OF MY WAY?

NO.

OI! WHAT DO YOU THINK I AM, YA BLEEDING DINGO--A *BARBIE*?!

BLAM BLAM!

THANK YOU! THANK YOU *ALL*! I COULDN'T HAVE *BEGUN* TO GET AWAY WITHOUT YOUR *SPLENDID* DIVERSION!

ELSEWHERE...

UHNNNG!

KRAK!

NOW, NOW, BLACKSNAKE--THAT'S ENOUGH. WE WANT MR. PALMER *ALIVE*--THE CABAL WANTS TO KNOW EVERYTHING THAT HE KNOWS ABOUT THE OTHER META-HUMANS.

AND YOU *ARE* GOING TO TELL US, PALMER. MAKE UP YOUR MIND ABOUT THAT.

KEEP... TELLING YOU... 'M NOT... PALMER!

REALLY, PALMER--IT DOESN'T DO ANY GOOD TO *DENY* IT. THE BODY BURIED IN YOUR COFFIN BELONGS TO OUR COMPATRIOT *GINSBURG!* HE WAS THE ONE WHO REALLY DIED IN THAT RAID ON YOUR PLACE. YOU ENLARGED THE BODY AND BURIED IT.

=SIGHHHH= PERHAPS YOU REALLY *BELIEVE* YOU'RE ADAM CRAY. PART OF A DEEP CONDITIONING. WE'LL FIND OUT. IT'LL ALL COME OUT IN THE WASH--THE *BRAIN* WASH, THAT IS.

I *LIKE* MY MIND... A LITTLE... *DIRTY*, THANKS!

WHAP!

GET OFF, YOU MORON!

BLACKSNAKE! GET AFTER PALMER! STING, GET UP AND HELP BLACKSNAKE, YOU INCOMPETENT FOOL!

HE WON'T GO FAR, MR. BAILEY. NOT SO LONG AS WE HAVE HIS SIZE-CHANGING BELT.

HE DOESN'T *HAVE TO* GO FAR, MS. HUBBARD!

HE CAN LINK US WITH THE CABAL AND, IF HE ESCAPES WITH THAT KNOWLEDGE, THAT MAKES *US* A THREAT.

AND YOU *KNOW* HOW THE CABAL DEALS WITH THREATS--OR *FAILURES!*

MAYBE YOU SHOULD START THINKING ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S WITNESS PROTECTION PLAN, HUBBARD.

EXCUSE ME. I BELIEVE THAT'S MINE.

DIDN'T THINK I'D DOUBLE BACK, DID YOU, HUBBARD?

SCHWUNK!

I DID.

BLACKSNAKE! YOU FOOL! YOU DIDN'T--!

AH SURE DID. AH DONE WHAT AH SWORE TO DO -- WHUT AH WAITED TOO LONG TO DO.

AH JUST KILLED ME RAY PALMER.

NEXT: THE CONCLUSION -- NUMBER THE DEAD!

NUMBER THE DEAD

BLACKSNAKE! YOU FOOL! YOU DIDN'T--!

AH SURE DID. AH DONE WHAT AH SWORE TO DO-- WHUT AH WAITED TOO LONG TO DO.

AH JUST KILLED ME RAY PALMER.

METROBANK

CARD NUMBER 7314

TRANSACTION

ASH WITHDR

MOUNT

80.00

BALANCE

1,468

JOHN OSTRANDER / KIM YALE • Writers
GEOF ISHERWOOD • Penciller
ROBERT CAMPANELLA • Inker
TODD KLEIN • Letterer
TOM McCRAW • Colorist
DAN RASPLER • Editor
JERRY SEGEL / JOE SHUSTER • Superman Creators
BOB KANE • Batman Creator

YOU FOOL! YOU COULD HAVE TAKEN PALMER ALIVE! YOU KNOW HOW THE CABAL REWARDS FAILURE--AND THEY WILL SEE THIS AS A FAILURE! THEY'LL HAVE YOUR HIDE!

ONLY IF YOU TELL 'EM ABOUT THIS, MR. BAILEY.

AT LAST! AH AM MAH RIGHTFUL SIZE AGAIN! ALL THEM MONTHS OF SCURRYIN' ROUND LIKE A FLEA ARE DONE!

FRANK 81-2

AH'M PURELY SORRY IT'S COME TO THIS, MR. BAILEY. YOU, TOO, MISS HUBBARD. BUT WHEN WE WAS RUNNIN' JOBS IN THE CIA, WHAT YOU TAUGHT ME WAS DAMAGE CONTROL.

DON'T LEAVE NOTHIN' BEHIND THAT WOULD CAUSE WORRY LATER. NO EVIDENCE. AN' MOST ESPECIALLY, NO WITNESSES.

NO, BLACKSNAKE! YOU CAN'T--!

BLACKSNAKE, DON'T KILL US! YOU WERE ALWAYS MY MOST *TRUSTED* AGENT--!

GYAAAAH!

KRUNCHH!

AH AIN'T GOT MY RIGHT HEIGHT BACK JUST TO HAVE TO GO ON THE RUN FROM THE CABAL. SOME-ONE'S GONNA HAVE T'TAKE THE FALL ON THIS, SIR. NOTHIN' PERSONAL.

SORRY, MR. BAILEY! I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO LOCATE...

OH NO!

AH KILLED PALMER, SWEET. JUST LIKE AH SAID AH'D DO.

PALMER ISN'T DEAD, OLD BUDDY.

WHAT *HAPPENED* HERE?

WHUT?

YER OUT O'YER PEA-PICKIN' MIND! THAT MAN IS AS DEAD AS THAT DOORNAIL IN HIM!

YEAH. HE IS. BUT HE REALLY *WASN'T* PALMER, "OLD BUDDY."

I AM.

AND *THIS* TIME, YOU MURDERING CREEP, I WILL SEE YOU *PAY* FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE!

KRAK!

KNOW WHAT? I'M GLAD!! IT GIVES ME ANOTHER CHANCE TO KILL YOU!!

ONCE WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH!!

ONCE WAS TOO MUCH!

WHAM!

IT WAS PEOPLE LIKE *YOU* WHO KILLED THE WOMAN I LOVED, HER WHOLE *RACE*, JUST TO GET TO *ME*!

FOR HER, FOR THEM, FOR THAT YOUNG MAN LYING DEAD OVER THERE, THE DAY OF RECKONING IS HERE!

NO!

FORGET TRYING TO ESCAPE ME LIKE THAT, BLACK-SNAKE! I'VE BEEN PULLING THESE SWITCHES FOR A *LONG* TIME!

THERE IS *NOWHERE* YOU CAN GO THAT I CAN'T FOLLOW!

FOR ALL THE BLOOD ON YOUR HANDS, THIS TIME YOU'RE GOING TO *PAY*!

ELSEWHERE:

IT'S GOING *WRONG*. I KNOW IT. WE SHOULD HAVE HEARD BY NOW.

WHEN *DOESN'T* IT GO WRONG WITH YOUR SQUAD, WALLER?

WHEN WE DON'T GET MIXED UP WITH PEOPLE LIKE *YOU*, STEEL.

LOOK AT YOU, CARMICHAEL. GOT A PHONE LINE PLUGGED INTO THE BACK OF YOUR *HEAD*! IT MAKES ME SICK JUST *LOOKIN'* AT YOU! HOW COULD YOU HAVE SOMETHING LIKE THAT DONE TO YOURSELF?

FOR FUN. NO DISTRACTIONS, PLEASE.

DON'T KNOW *WHY* I LET YOU TALK ME INTO DOING WORK FOR YOU ANYWAY, STEEL.

BECAUSE YOU WERE *ENJOYING* IT. BECAUSE I *HAD* NO OTHER CHOICE!

ALL I KNEW ABOUT THIS *CABAL* WAS THAT IT WAS DRAWN FROM MANY SOURCES IN THE GOVERNMENT AND THAT IT WAS UP TO SOMETHING ILLEGAL! I COULDN'T TRUST ANYONE IN-HOUSE FOR MY INVESTIGATION. I *HAD* TO GO OUTSIDE-- TO *YOU*!

THEY'RE TRYING TO ESTABLISH GOVERNMENTAL CONTROL OVER META-HUMANS. THAT'S WHY THEY WERE AFTER RAY PALMER--TO PUMP HIM FOR WHAT HE KNOWS.

THEY MADE ILLEGAL DEALS WITH QURAC, GIVING THEM INFORMATION ON THE METAGENE THAT LET MARLO CREATE THE *JIHAD*, HIS TERRORIST GROUP.

WE *HAD* TO KIDNAP MARLO BEFORE THE CABAL OR SOMEBODY ELSE COULD GET HIM--OR KILL HIM. SO WE COULD FIND OUT *WHO* HIS *CONTACT* WITH THE CABAL WAS.

FINE. WE *KNOW* THAT. MAJOR McCLELLAN, WHO JUST HAPPENS TO BE AT THE SAME BASE WHERE MARLO WAS BEING HELD, WHERE SUPERMAN, BATMAN, AQUAMAN, ISRAELI META-HUMAN AGENTS AND WHAT'S LEFT OF THE JIHAD ALL HAPPEN TO BE GATHERED.

AND MY SQUAD HAS TO GO IN, TRY TO *FIND* THIS McCLELLAN, AND SNEAK BACK OUT WITH HIM AGAIN BEFORE THE CABAL SNUFFS HIM, SINCE BY NOW THEY *ALSO* KNOW *WE'RE* AFTER HIM! OH, YOU GET US ALL THE *DANDY* JOBS, STEEL! UH HUH!

THAT'S WHY THE SQUAD GETS PAID THE BIG BUCKS, WALLER. TO DO THE TOUGH, NASTY JOBS.

WHUPS! I'M PICKING UP SOME MESSAGE TRAFFIC FROM THE BASE ON BLOOD ISLAND!

"UH... IT SOUNDS LIKE THE SQUAD HAS RUN INTO A TAD OF TROUBLE."

OHHHH! I *KNOW* OF YOU! YURR TH' *MAN O' STEEL*, ARE YOU NOT? WHAT'S IT YOU MOST FEAR, I'M WONDERING?

OH, T'IS LOSING CONTROL O' YURR POWERS, IS IT? WELL, YOU JUST *HAVE!*

NO!

EXCELLENT! YOU ALL MAKE A *SPLENDID* DIVERSION! WHILE YOU BEAT UP EACH OTHER, *I* GET TO SLIP AWAY!

I'LL TAKE THE FREIGHTER THAT WAS GOING TO TAKE MARLO OFF, GIVE THEM A SONG AND DANCE, AND MAKE MYSELF SCARCE. I'VE GOT MY MILLIONS I'VE SKIMMED OFF IN MY SECRET ACCOUNT...

...EVEN THE *CABAL* WON'T BE ABLE TO FIND ME!

I STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT ALL THIS HAS TO DO WITH THE DEATH OF RAY PALMER--BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, *THAT* MAN SEEMS TO BE THE FOCUS OF A LOT OF ATTENTION!

WHOEVER YOU ARE, YOU'RE NOT LEAVING HERE UNTIL I GET SOME *ANSWERS!*

LOOK, BATMAN. I'M NOT INTERESTED IN BEATING YOU UPAGAIN. CAN'T AFFORD THE TIME RIGHT NOW. SOMEONE'S GETTING AWAY WHO'S THE KEY TO THIS WHOLE THING.

FWIP FWIP FWIP

LET US DEAL WITH HIM AND THEN WE'LL TALK.

FWAM!

SORRY. NOT THIS TIME.

WALLER'S IMPLICATED IN RAY PALMER'S DEATH. I WARNED HER THAT I'D CLOSE HER DOWN SOMEDAY IF I FELT I HAD TO. TALK *NOW*. CONVINCE ME TO DO OTHER-WISE.

FORGET IT! THERE'S NO TIME AND I DON'T FEEL LIKE ARGUING!

KRAK!

YOU'RE ANGRY, TURNER. SLOPPY. I EXPECTED BETTER FROM YOU.

MISTER, YOU AIN'T SEEN MAD YET!!

BRAAP BRAAP!

BLAM!

BLAM!

BLAM!

SPAKOW SPAK!

YOU CALL THAT SHOOTING?

BLAM BLAM

BLAM

CLAK

BLAM!

YA BLEEDIN' MATCHHEAD! GO PICK ON SOMEBODY ELSE!

NO. I KILL YOU.

NAAH.

BROAAARR!

I'M STILL DIZZY FROM VERTIGO'S POWERS--BUT THAT GUY IS THE KEY TO THIS WHOLE MYSTERY!

I CAN'T LET HIM ESCAPE!

QUICKLY THOSE NEAR AT HAND, YOUR AID IS NEEDED!

YES! YES! THERE'S NO FLIES ON YOU, GEORGE A. McCLELLAN! WE'RE CLEAN AWAY!

YAHHHHHG!

SNEKT!

WHIIT!

WHOK!

I HEARD ABOUT YOU FROM BEN. YOU'RE *JUDITH*-- SOMETHING OF A NINJA, A *SHADOW-WARRIOR*.

WELL, I AM THE SHADOWS. CAN YOU FIGHT *ME*?

ELSEWHERE :

YOU AIN'T GONNA KILL ME, PALMER! AH *KNOWS* YOU HERO-TYPES! AGAINST YER *CODES*, AIN'T IT?

I *HAVE* KILLED, BLACKSNAKE--WHEN I WAS PART OF LAETHWEN'S SOCIETY. BUT I DON'T *LOOK* FOR MORE PEOPLE TO KILL. I'M *TIRED* OF KILLINGS--OF DEATH.

AND THERE ARE *OTHER* WAYS OF DEALING WITH YOU.

RRRIIIP!

NO! YUH JUST CAN'T *STRAND* ME HERE, PALMER! AH'LL *DIE!*

I'LL COME BACK FOR YOU EVENTUALLY. JUST DON'T WANDER. MIGHT MAKE IT HARD TO FIND YOU.

STOP!

EAGLE

SNAP BLADE

I'M SORRY, ADAM. IT ALL WENT WRONG.

SNAP BLADE

YOU DESERVE A BETTER RESTING PLACE THAN *THIS*.

C'MON, KID. I'LL GET YOU BACK WHERE YOU BELONG.

ELSEWHERE:

OUT OF MY WAY, BLAST YOU! *ALL* OF YOU!

TURN THIS BOAT AROUND--NOW. GO BACK TO THE DOCK. I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK YOU!

THIS IS NOT A REQUEST!

AND I AM NOT PLAYING GAMES!

BLAM BLAM!

SKIMMER

I WILL NOT BE--

OH NO!

YAHHHHH!

SKIMMER

KA-BLAM!

I TOLD HIM TO TURN THE BOAT AROUND...

WHY CAN'T I GET ANY ANSWERS TO MY QUESTIONS?

FWIP FWIP FWIP

URGHH!

THOK!

FWOMP!

AAAGH!

FZAKKK!

GET...OUT... OF... MY... MIND!

YU'LL FALL! YU HAFTA FALL!

NOT... TODAY! AND NOT... TO YOU!

WHADOOM!

WHAT ARE YOU?! WHAT DID THEY DO TO YOU TO MAKE YOU SUCH A VICIOUS LITTLE GIRL?

OKAY, I WANT TO KNOW WHERE MARLO IS, I WANT TO KNOW WHERE STEEL AND WALLER ARE, ESPECIALLY WALLER. I WANT TO KNOW IF RAY PALMER'S ALIVE OR DEAD--AND EITHER WAY, I WANT TO SEE HIM.

OR I'M GOING TO REALLY GET MAD.

LATER...

...THE BEST WAY TO GET THIS MICRO/FORCE--WHICH *I'M* RESPONSIBLE FOR ANYWAY--OFF MY BACK WAS TO FAKE MY DEATH. IN AN EARLIER ATTACK, ONE OF THEIR OWN AGENTS WAS KILLED. HE'S THE ONE IN MY GRAVE.

WE *KNEW* THE CABAL WOULD PROBABLY SEE THROUGH THE RUSE, SO WALLER RECRUITED THIS KID *CRAY* TO BECOME THE ATOM.

A BIT OF *LEGERDEMAIN*--YOU KNOW, SLEIGHT OF HAND, LIKE A STAGE MAGICIAN USES. YOU WATCH THE HAND THAT'S BUSY WHILE THE OTHER HAND PERFORMS THE TRICK.

BUT I COULDN'T TURN UP ANYTHING ON EITHER THE CABAL *OR* THE MICRO/FORCE. THEN THEY APPROACHED CAPTAIN BOOMERANG ABOUT SELLING OUT CRAY. THE KID HIMSELF SUGGESTED THE PLAN AS A TRAP. BAILEY WOULD KNOW MORE ABOUT THE CABAL.

STING WAS THE MESSENGER BUT HE'D HAD ENOUGH. I ENLARGED HIM AGAIN. STEEL PUT HIM IN PROTECTIVE CUSTODY, AND THEN I TOOK HIS PLACE. THE IDEA WAS THAT I'D PROTECT CRAY AND WE'D NAIL BAILEY.

I DIDN'T DO *MY* JOB. IT WAS CRAY WHO GOT "NAILED." BLACKSNAKE KILLED BAILEY AND HUBBARD. STING DOESN'T REALLY KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE CABAL.

RAY, WHY DIDN'T YOU COME TO ONE OF *US* WITH ALL THIS? WE COULD'VE CLEARED ALL THIS UP WITH YOU.

I MIGHT DISPUTE THAT WITH YOU, PALMER, BUT IT BRINGS UP *ANOTHER* QUESTION--WHERE *ARE* STEEL AND WALLER?

NO, I DON'T THINK SO. FOR THE MOST PART, WE FIGHT BEST AGAINST PEOPLE WHO WEAR BRIGHT COSTUMES AND TRY TO BLATANTLY SEIZE POWER. THESE GUYS ARE ALL SHADOWS AND SMOKE, BEST LEFT TO PEOPLE LIKE STEEL AND WALLER.

"THEY'RE MAKING A REPORT SOMEWHERE ELSE."

VERY INTERESTIN' REPORT, THIS HERE. WHO ELSE HAS SEEN IT?

FOOSH!

R. PALMER

EYES ONLY

NO ONE, SIR. *EYES ONLY*, AS IT SAYS. AS YOU *REQUESTED*.

GOOD. GOOD.

BASICALLY GOOD JOB. STILL, YOU SHOULD'VE CONSULTED THIS OFFICE...

AS THE MEMO SAID, SIR, WE WEREN'T SURE JUST HOW FAR THE CABAL'S INFILTRATION *WENT*.

YOU SUGGESTIN' I *PERSONALLY* WAS INVOLVED?

NO. THERE'S NOTHING I CAN *PROVE*-- TO EITHER A COURT OF LAW OR THE MEDIA.

BUT I THINK I COULD *CONVINCE* RAY PALMER WITHOUT MUCH TROUBLE, AND *HE* CONVINCE A MAN WITH A BIG RED "S" ON HIS CHEST AND ANOTHER WITH A BAT ON *HIS*, AND A CERTAIN SEA-KING, TOO.

AND THEY IN TURN WOULD *CONVINCE* THE MAJORITY OF *THEIR* COLLEAGUES. AND I DON'T THINK YOU'D *LIKE* THAT ONE BIT.

THIS OFFICE *PRIDES* ITSELF... GOOD RELATIONS... THE WHOLE DARN META-HUMAN COMMUNITY. I CAN ASSURE YOU, WHATEVER HAS HAPPENED IN THE PAST, WON'T...NOT ON *MY* WATCH.

WELL, THAT'S JUST FINE. BECAUSE I GUARANTEE THAT IF I HEAR EVEN A *WHISPER* SUGGESTING ANYTHING ELSE, THEY *WILL* KNOW. WHETHER I'M ALIVE OR DEAD, THEY WILL KNOW.

JUST SO YOU *UNDERSTAND*.

WELL, *MAYBE* THAT'LL DO IT. WOULDN'T BET THE RENT ON IT.

WHAT'RE PALMER'S PLANS NOW?

HE'S GOING TO STICK WITH US FOR A WHILE, MAYBE HELP US FIND ANOTHER REPLACEMENT, BEFORE HE GOES INTO RE-TIREMENT.

CRAY'S GETTING KILLED HAS REALLY GOTTEN TO HIM.

IT'S GOTTEN TO YOU, TOO, WALL.

YOU WANT TO KNOW A *SECRET*, STEEL? THEY *ALL* DO.

EVERY DAY, I GO BACK, AND I REMEMBER THE NAMES AND FACES OF THOSE WHO'VE DIED SINCE I STARTED THE SQUAD. EVERY DAY I NUMBER THE DEAD.

I KNOW HOW THEY DIED, AND WHY. *OTHERS* MAY DIE. *I* MAY DIE. WE ALL KNOW THAT GOING IN. BUT I NEVER TAKE IT LIGHTLY. NEVER WILL. *NEVER*.

I WISH I COULD SAY THAT EVERYONE WE'VE *WORKED* FOR FELT THE *SAME*.

SEE YOU AROUND, STEEL.

NEXT: VIVA LA ¡SQUAD!

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THEY'VE ALL GOT QUESTIONS...

MARLO'S™ GOT THE ANSWERS!

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